

Learning Partner for Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's Young people leaving care funding stream

Invitation to Tender - by Friday 15 September 2017

1. About Esmée

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future. We do this by funding the charitable work of organisations that are building an inclusive, creative and sustainable society.

The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. In 2016 we made grants of £42.4 million towards a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment, food and social change. We also have a £45 million allocation to social investments for organisations with the aim of creating social impact.

2. About the Leaving Care Funding Stream

In 2016 we launched a new approach to funding for organisations working with young people in and leaving care. This funding stream is a more focused way of working for Esmée. We want to understand and learn from what makes a real difference to the lives of young people leaving care, share that learning with the sector, and improve future practice as a result. As a foundation, we also want to understand the benefits and drawbacks of working in a more focused way.

<https://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/young-people-leaving-care>

Our approach to supporting this work will be developed alongside the organisations we fund, but funded organisations have been asked to expect to:

- come together to share learning with others in the funding stream regularly;
- co-create shared measures of impact with others in the funding stream and collect and share data and evidence;
- if helpful, take part in an external evaluation.

We will also work with other key organisations for young people – both statutory and charitable – and with care experienced young people themselves, to learn and share learning, and influence and develop good practice.

3. Outcomes of the Funding

Through our funding and non-financial support we wish to see care leavers supported by the system and by their networks to feel emotionally stable and be financially secure, ultimately making a successful transition to independence. The outcomes we want our support to achieve are:

1. Young people in and leaving care are more easily able to form healthy relationships that help them make a successful transition to adulthood.
2. Young people receive a consistently high standard of statutory support that has been informed by their views.
3. There is greater alignment and coherence in the work of the voluntary sector in ensuring a successful transition to adult life for care leavers.

We are asking applicants and grantees to explain how they plan to work towards outcome 1 or 2.

Outcome 3 is something we want our support to the funding stream as a whole, including convening and collaborative work with organisations and stakeholders we involve through our wider learning community, to achieve.

See the appendix for a draft Theory of Change we developed with Project Oracle while developing the scope of the funding stream.

4. Learning Partner – what we would like them to achieve

- Be an enabler - facilitate, make connections and enable shared learning and peer support amongst organisations we fund and those we involve from the wider sector: our learning community.
- Be a mediator – led by the funded organisations themselves, explore the possibility of moving towards shared measurement of impact for organisations in the funding stream.
- Add value – use their expertise to advise Esmée on the most and least productive avenues of support for the sector, and key connections to make. Advise Esmée on the benefits and drawbacks of commissioning additional evaluation for individual funded organisations, or additional work on developing shared measurement.
- Be a challenger - be a critical friend to Esmée and the organisations we fund, asking questions and making sure we are being both realistic and ambitious about what we can achieve.

5. Learning Partner – deliverables

Key - and included within the scope of an initial contract:

- Quarterly advisory meetings with Esmée staff to discuss progress and plan learning events
- Initial co-design (with Esmée staff and funded organisations) of an outline plan for peer learning and support over the next five years.
- Plan and facilitate 2-4 half day learning events each year with both funded organisations and relevant other key stakeholders, including care experienced young people.
- Maintain contact with a wider learning community between meetings, sharing learning and actions from each learning event online in a light touch way (ie no long written reports).

Potential - could be commissioned in addition to the scope of this contact from the learning partner or other consultants or organisations:

- Work to move forward shared measures, if there is appetite amongst organisations we fund.
- Work with individual organisations to build capacity for evaluation or data collection, where relevant.
- Report to our Trustees in year three on the benefits and drawbacks of funding in this more focused way.

6. What we're looking for in a Learning Partner

- Experience of facilitating and convening organisations to work together in a creative way - with the aim of sharing learning.
- Experience of working in an inclusive way with a range of stakeholders – of empowering service users or those with lived experience to share their knowledge with funders and commissioners.
- Understanding of different evaluation methods and practice..
- Ability to maintain a digital learning community (using online communities, social media or email).
- Knowledge of the voluntary sector and its relationships with statutory support for children and young people.
- Experience of working with both voluntary sector and public sector bodies.
- Evidence of a clear and concise writing style.
- A good working relationship with high levels of trust and honesty.

7. Tender requirements

- A response to this brief – why you or your organisation is fitted to deliver the work, your plans for the first year of work, what has the most potential, and what you might question or change.
- Details of two examples of recent relevant projects – what you delivered, what you learned and how they are relevant.
- What other things you would need to know before taking on the work.
- A breakdown of costs for the first year, based on the key deliverables in point 5, including day rates and details of who would deliver the work.
- An indication of which of the potential additional deliverables you might be interested in providing (you don't need to put in a bid for this yet).
- Contact details for two relevant referees.

8. Timescale for the work

The initial contract will be for one year, beginning in Autumn 2017, and extended on an annual basis for up to five years if the working partnership is going well.

We have been open to applications since November 2016, and have recently made 3 grants. By the end of 2017, we expect to have made about 10 grants, at which point the shape and scope of the work the funding stream will support will be more clear.

We would like to get the new grantees together in late 2017 for the first time to discuss the shape of learning and evaluation for the funding stream. Planning for this meeting will need to begin in October 2017.

9. Budget

There is a total budget for the Learning Partner's work of £20,000 per year. Proposals should be budgeted with this in mind and costings should include VAT and travel.

Esmée will arrange and provide meeting rooms for learning events, and pay for catering and travel expenses for participants. We will provide administrative support in organising events, but all event materials and recording of learning, minutes etc are the responsibility of the Learning Partner.

10. How to apply

If you are interested in tendering for this project, please send the following information to Gina Crane by Friday 15 September (details below):

- Your tender document
- Relevant summaries of CVs for the project leads

We will meet with preferred candidates on Tuesday 10 October in order to discuss how they might approach and carry out the work. We are looking to appoint someone that week, with a first meeting in the week beginning 16 October where we can begin work.

Appendix – draft theory of change for the funding stream overleaf

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation – Young People Leaving Care Funding Stream

